



CHRISTMAS POETRY.

Even while we sing, he smiles his last,
And leaves our sphere a lonely land.
The good old year is passing by,
Oh, be the new as kind. —Brent.

A cheer for old Christmas! all hail to the day!
I trust 'twill a merry one be.
May Christmas-time breathe its life into the day,
To make it a bright one to thee.

As merry as the robin's song,
On some sweet morn of May,
In joy as rich in love as strong,
To this glad Christmas day.

Keep the feast with gladness,
Take the tidings of the past,
To the new year's merriment,
Now, merry bells, ring out at last,
For us and the Christmas day.

Oh, there should be the sweetest flowers,
To know when the year is past,
And thus should be the happiest hours,
Could wishing make them so.

It maketh spring in winter,
Our merry Christmas day,
May it chase frost and sorrow
Forever far away.

Select Story.

ERIC WINSTON'S CHRISTMAS.

BY DWIGHT BALDWIN.

One winter's afternoon a group of boys, ranging in age from six to sixteen years, were engaged in a battle on a public street in a retired portion of a great, thriving city. It was the day before Christmas, and school was out, and the friendly affray, partaking of entire good feeling and heartiness, was a parting expression of cheer for the holiday season. Roland health and high spirits spoke in the ringing faces, and pleasant anticipations filled every boy's heart. The battle was a war of defense or challenge, and the "snowy spheres" navigated the clear, crisp air in a white, scattering shower.

"Hurrah, drive them back to the fence!" shouted the leader of one of the contending factions, and so hot and furious became the assault that the beleaguered party retreated in dismay and confusion, leaving only the broken, discarded snow and one prostrate boy on the abandoned field of battle.

The latter raised himself, with a heavy laugh as being downed in the battle, waved a parting adieu to his friends, and shaking the snow from his garments started homeward at a brisk rate of speed.

He paused as he happened to glance toward the high, stone fence which surrounded a building near by. What he had not noticed before was visible now. Seated on a coping, gazing around him in a dazed, confused sort of way, was an old man, closely muffled. His hat was on the ground, an old, worn grip-sack lay trodden under feet near by, and the ruddy face and gray head showed where a dozen stray balls had left their mark. He shook his fist half angrily after the shooting throng that had been his discomfiter, and then struggled to his feet.

"The young rascals!" he ejaculated. "Ha! boy, are you one of them?"

There was a half-smiled, half-penitent expression on Eric Winston's face as he hastened to the side of the old man and took up his hat and handed it to him with a bow.

"I'm afraid I am, sir," he replied; "but I'm sure my friends didn't intend to make you a target. They're too good-natured for that, and you only happened in the way."

"And got assailed for wandering into the enemy's camp, eh? You fought the man, his good hammer, and he resisted as Eric brushed the snow from his satchel and politely handed it to him. "Well, well, boys will be boys, and you're a good one for trying to help me in my distress," and patting Eric on the shoulder, he hobbled from the spot.

"Dear me, how late!" ejaculated Eric, as a distant bell chimed four several strokes. "This won't do. I've loitered too long already, and now Mother Ursula will be losing my ears for playing so much on the way," and with a bound he had made the snow drift, and never relaxed his speed until he reached a one-story, antiquated house that stood far back from the street, on one of the most modest thoroughfares of the vicinity.

He did not enter the house at once, but casting a side look at the windows made his way to a shed at the rear, and seizing an axe he piled it right industriously, trying to make up for lost time, and had soon piled the fuel for the night. Then he entered the warm, cozy kitchen with the air of a conscious culprit.

He had expected a severe scolding for his delinquency, but as he softly piled an armful of wood behind the stove, he was amazed to see the object of his fears—good Dame Ursula—regarding him with tears in her eyes.

Eric Winston's story was a strange and sad one. When he was two years old his mother had died and his father was away at sea. The lonely child was cared for by a hired nurse until the money Robert Winston had left before going on his last voyage was exhausted, and then his fate quivered in the balance.

Neither Robert Winston nor his ship had ever been heard from, and it was supposed that he had perished in some severe ocean storm. This conviction became sure as the months sped by and there was no word from the missing sailor. It was decided to send the child to the orphan asylum, when Ursula Chester and her husband, who had been befriended by the late Robert Winston, adopted him, and with them he had lived ever since.

It was a lonely life that the boy led in the companionship of these old people. Adolph Chester was a strange, eccentric old man, whose life was passed in one atmosphere—music. With him harmony was a devotion, a shrine of worship, and he had infused much of his genius into the adopted waif. While Dame Ursula managed to make a modest living, aided by Eric, from the sale of knit stockings and herbs raised in the garden, the husband devoted all his time to music. Once he had sold a composition, and then his refined, rough business men, had returned to his darling theme, and becoming more and more absorbed in playing his old violin, was adjudged to be half-demented by his neighbors.

But what a musician! What divine strains he drew from the little time-worn violin. What a jewel of melody and beauty was that cracked and aged instrument. Many a time, recognizing its age, sympathy and value, musical savants had offered him fabulous amounts for the violin. It was a genuine Stradivarius, they told him—one of seven of its peculiar kind in existence. To all their offers old Adolph Chester had smiled negatively, and said sadly and placidly:

"We will sell the violin—when I die."

Thinking of all this at that very moment, Eric was moved to sympathy as he noted Dame Ursula's somber face. He glided to her side. Of late there had been little money and much of worry and destitution at the humble cottage, and the absence of usual preparation for the Christmas festivities was noted by Eric with some little disappointment manifest in his handsome boyish features.

"What has happened, good mother?" he asked softly.

"The worst, my poor boy," replied the old woman pathetically. "A debt is due—a debt has run away. We are destitute. To-day I told Adolph. He must sell the violin—we must have bread. I told him. He smiled sadly. 'I have given my years to music,' he said. 'To-day I give my life, my violin, my jewel of harmony and sweetness, but not to beggary, to benefit the world—to bequeath to others the glory and rapture of the past, when true musicians starved to give beauty and light to the world. These were his strange words. He must be deaf, Eric, to leave us to starve, and a fortune in the house. Since then he has shut himself in his lonely room, and the violin is mute. What is that? Eric, boy, run! run! He may have done himself some harm.'"

In a flash Eric Winston was at the door of the old musician's apartment. He burst open the door, his mind filled with a thousand direful apprehensions. One glance showed him that Adolph Chester was safe, but the violin—

It lay a mass of ruins upon the table, and its destroyer bent over it, a hammer in his hand. The cherished companion of his lonely years lay in fragments before him. What monstrous delusion could have it in presence, to hang the holy and hallowed faith and friendship, and each recurring Christmas time had found us more closely united. Let us hope and believe that when even the toddlers of our family shall have seen their heads grow gray the spirit of Christmas shall still make young their hearts.

The startling shriek in bedchamber still rang in Eric's ears, and he was still in the doorway, when a voice called to him from the room beyond.

"Eric, my boy, my boy!"

It was indeed his father. And what a happy ending to a mournful Christmas Eve! For Robert Winston, after fifteen years' exile on a desert island, had returned a rich man, and the old musician never wanted friends more.

So courtesy, friendship, and sacrifice to art were richly rewarded as the sweet bells rang out the glad Christmas morn.

Living on Christmas.

Perhaps there is no holiday more generally observed, the world over, which calls out all that is most gracious in human nature, than Christmas. Some of the choicest thoughts of the best writers, in both prose and verse, take their inspiration from this season. Irving, in his Sketch Book, writes thus gracefully:

"One of the least pleasing effects of modern refinement is the havoc it has made among the hearty old holiday customs. It has completely taken off the sharp touchings and spirited reliefs of these embellishments of life, and has worn down society into a more smooth and polished, but certainly a less characteristic surface. Many of the games and ceremonials of Christmas have been entirely dispensed with, and like the shreds of old Falstaff, are become matters of speculation and dispute among commentators. They flourished in times full of spirit and life, when men enjoyed life roughly, but heartily and vigorously—times wild and picturesque, which have furnished poetry with its richest materials, and the drama with its most attractive variety of characters and manners."

The world has become more worldly. There is more of dissipation and less of enjoyment. Pleasure has expanded into a broader but a shallower stream, and has forsaken many of those deep and quiet channels where it flowed sweetly through the calm bosom of domestic life. Society has acquired a more enlightened and elegant tone, but it has lost many of its strong local peculiarities, its homely feelings, its honest, first-side delights. The traditional customs of golden-hearted antiquity, its feudal hospitalities, and lordly wassailings, have passed away with the baronial castle and stately man-houses in which they were celebrated. They comported with the shadowy hall, the great oaken gallery, and the tapestried parlor, but are unfitted to the light, shadowy saloons and gay drawing-rooms of the modern villa."

Merry Christmas.

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"You know my friend Winston?" began the musician.

"I am he."

"You? Then this boy is your son."

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OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

From Our Regular Correspondent.
WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 18, 1886.

What Congress is likely to do one day ahead no one can safely say. Senator Sherman made a remark in regard to the work of the Senate, which Speaker Carlisle repeated in reference to the work of the House, and it was that there were many possibilities but few probabilities.

Neither branch of Congress adhered to the program which had been arranged for it in the early part of the week.

No one expected a tariff debate to come off in the Senate, but everybody was prepared for an agitation of the question in the House on Thursday. As chance and circumstances would have it, the Senate decided to defer the subject. Then Col. Morrison proposed to ask the House to proceed to the consideration of revenue bills, and the friends of the tariff legislation think his motion will prevail.

A story was printed to the effect that the President had promised to aid Mr. Morrison by securing four votes for him from the New York delegation. Of course everybody knew that the President would not do anything of the kind. The story had its foundation in the fact that several New York Democratic members who voted against consideration of any tariff measure at last session, have since changed their views, and will vote with Mr. Morrison.

If the Senate cannot be craved it is understood that the present plan of the Republicans in the House is to strike off the tobacco tax \$28,000,000; to strike off 20 per cent. of the sugar duty, \$10,000,000; to make alcohol used in the arts and manufactures tax free, which would strike off \$10,000,000 more. This would reduce the revenue \$48,000,000 in all.

When the Senate was talking, Tariff, a disappointing speech was made by Senator Dawes of Mass. His associates knew that he was trying to be re-elected to the Senate this winter, and as some of his constituents have views on tariff subjects, interest was felt in the drift of his remarks, and rather better attention was given him than the Senate usually accords to speeches. The Senator began with platitudes which no one cared to dispute, dwelt at length upon the past policy of the Republican party which, he said, had been to reduce customs, duties, and internal taxes to the point nearest the needs of the Government; criticised Secretary Manning's report, and finally wound up with some sneering comments upon the President's message.

Senator Beck's bill to prevent Senators from acting as attorneys of railroads whose interests are liable to come before the Senate was mutilated and twisted out of shape in Committee by such experts as Senators Everts and Floor. The way in which they evaded, postponed, dodged and finally modified this measure, which was so warmly supported by public opinion, may be called creditable to their ingenuity, but not to their respect for the integrity of the law.

What is worse still, Senator Edmunds told beside these manoeuvres, assisted by Senator Mitchell of Oregon.

The railroad Senators who think it is all right to legislate upon railroad matters while taking big fees as attorneys for railroad corporations, could not stave off consideration of the Beck bill altogether, however, and on Wednesday it came up for debate.

The Woman Suffragists are coming to Washington as usual to hold their annual convention and they have asked for the use of the hall of the House of Representatives on the evenings of Jan. 25th, 26th, and 27th. The women want a chance to be heard literally within the walls of Congress, and it is probable they will have it. The Committee on Rules is to decide the matter. Representative Townsend of Illinois introduced the bill, making the request for the Hall, "But," said he, "this does not mean that I am a convert to woman suffrage."

The President made his first appearance in public since his illness at the theatre where he saw Lawrence Barrett in "Rienzi." The audience included many others distinguished in public and social life. Among those in the crowd were noticed Speaker Carlisle, Gen. Sherman and Sheridan, Chief Justice Waite and family, Hon. S. C. Cox and several Senators and Judges. Col. and Mrs. Lamont sat in the box with the President and Mrs. Cleveland, and obstructed a view of the President greatly to the annoyance of hundreds of curious eyes. Some flapping rheumatism was apparent to the president's deliberate movements and slight limp, but otherwise he looked well. On one occasion President Arthur attended the theatre here in Italian English style, bringing in his footman to stand at his box during the performance. On another occasion, however, he came without a reserved seat, and as there was only standing room left, took his position in the crowd until some friend saw and sent for him.

R. W. POPE is the authorized agent of the sale of Dr. J. H. McLean's Family Medicines for Woodsfield.

Too Conversational.

"What have you for dessert?" asked the tired boarder of the new girl with spit-curls and an avenging smile.

"Mincepieapplespierryrrollan decoanuppingonlythecoanupuddin'salloutatthatwhatyouforeominate," answered the sweet thing.

FOR DYSPESIA and Liver Complaint, you have a printed guarantee on every bottle of Shiloh's Kidney and Bladder Pills. It never fails to cure. For sale by R. W. Pope.

Only Five.

"Any lost children down there?" asked a woman's voice through the telephone of police headquarters the other day.

"Yes, five of them," was the reply.

"Only five! I've lost seven, and I wonder where the other two can be?"

Hood's Sarsaparilla has cured thousands of cases of rheumatism. This is abundant reason for belief that it will cure you. Try it.

ARE YOU MADE miserable by Indigestion, Constipation, Dizziness, Loss of Appetite, Yellow Skin? Shiloh's Kidney Pills is a positive cure. For sale by R. W. Pope.

SHILOH'S CURE will immediately relieve Croup, Whooping Cough and Bronchitis. For sale by R. W. Pope.

A NASAL INJECTOR free with each bottle of Shiloh's Catarrh Remedy. Price 50 cents. For sale by R. W. Pope.

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A. T. Stewart's Bones.

W. A. Croft tells the following story of the return of the stolen bones of the late A. T. Stewart. He says he had the story from a member of the Hilton family at a dinner party. He says: "It was a couple of years and anterior to that, I think my informant said that the bones were finally ransomed. Judge Hilton persistently refused to consent to it and at last, when Mrs. Stewart declared herself unable any longer to carry the burden of the ghostly thought that the remains of her husband were being carted around the country by a gang of thieves, she defied her lawyer's scruples and concluded negotiations."

"Mrs. Stewart gave \$25,000 instead of the \$50,000 at first demanded. The bargain was made through a lawyer who seemed to have no other briefs, and who probably got the 'ghost'